



## **CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS!!**

### **Overview of the Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) Nationally**

The MRC program was created after President Bush's 2002 State of the Union Address in which he asked all Americans to volunteer in support of their country, in whatever capacity they were able. The MRC is comprised of medical and public health professionals, as well as non-medical personnel, who serve as volunteers to respond to natural disasters and emergencies. These volunteers may choose to work in their local communities; or may choose to respond nationally during times of disaster. Volunteers may also choose to become involved in public health initiatives to improve the health and wellness of all Americans.

The need for trained and credentialed, supplemental medical and public health personnel to assist with emergency operations was highlighted after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Many medical and public health professionals sought to support emergency relief efforts, but there was no organized approach to channel their efforts. The MRC program provides the structure necessary to deploy both medical and public health personnel in response to an emergency. The system identifies specific, trained, credentialed personnel who are available and who are ready to respond to specific, emergency needs. Keep in mind that the "medical" in Medical Reserve Corps does not limit MRC units to medical professionals. Individuals without medical training are essential to the mission and are greatly needed to support response and relief efforts!

### **The South Central Illinois Medical Reserve Corps (SCI MRC)**

The South Central Illinois Medical Reserve Corps is a locally-based, volunteer group housed in the Clinton County Health Department with an additional office located at the Washington County Health Department. It was formed in August of 2010 from a cadre of volunteers who had been serving in the community for several years and was expanded in 2013 to better serve the residents of Washington County. The SCI MRC's objective is to support the Health Department's mission to "provide services to protect the public's health and to enhance the quality of human life through health education, health promotion and prevention." Volunteers may be called upon to assist with prevention and outreach activities including: helping with local health fairs and C.A.R.E.S. activities; designing bulletin-board displays; doing public speaking on public health initiatives; visiting schools to teach proper hand washing, Tar Wars, Speed R.I.D.E., Child S.A.F.E. or Risk Watch programs; writing newsletters or media releases; giving flu shots; assisting with mailings; or teaching classes in active living or healthy eating, just to name a few.

In addition, the SCI MRC works with the local Emergency Management Agencies (EMA) to provide emergency communication services (ARES) and to supplement existing emergency services to provide relief for emergency workers. Other partners may include local hospitals (St. Joseph's and Washington County), neighboring health departments (such as Bond, Fayette, Marion or St. Clair counties), or other organizations (such as the Red Cross) whenever critical events overwhelm existing resources within a community. These activities may include helping to: provide communications, direct traffic, deliver medical supplies, staff shelters or alternate care facilities, support hospital surge capacity, assist with mass prophylaxis clinics, and much, much more.

The SCI MRC meets regularly for updates, education and training. As a volunteer, it is imperative to attend these meetings on a regular basis so that you are trained and prepared for when a disaster strikes our county. Additional trainings, drills and exercises are held throughout the year to challenge and increase our skills. The specific role that you will play, and the activities in which you will participate, will depend upon your background, interests and skills, as well as the needs of the MRC unit and the community. Many MRC members are just like you – educators, counselors, administrative professionals, clergy members, nurses, doctors, pharmacists, therapists, veterinarians, ham radio operators, and other community members who believe in keeping our local area healthy, prepared and resilient. They share your commitment to helping others and making a difference.

***Come join with us and make a difference in your community today --  
Remember, health promotion, preparedness and prevention begins with you!***

**Stop by your local Health Department for an application (930-A Fairfax Street in Carlyle or 177 S. Washington in Nashville) or call (618) 594-2723 to learn more.**

